

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-02 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00  
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-05  
IO-13 /090 W  
-----028349 091209Z /41

R 091012Z SEP 77  
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0641  
INFO USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 2177

DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINR PGOV SREF NI XA BC  
SUBJECT: GOB ATTITUDES TOWARD NIGERIA

REF: STATE 208244

1. FOLLOWING APPRAISAL OF GOB ATTITUDES ON THE THREE POINTS  
REQUESTED REFTEL IS BASED PRINCIPALLY ON DISCUSSIONS OVER PAST  
WEEKS WITH EXTAFF MINISTRY OFFICIALS, DISCUSSIONS FACILITATED BY  
THE RECENT VISIT TO SOUTHERN AFRICA BY NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE  
OBASANJO.

2. GOB ATTITUDES TOWARD PRESENT NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT.  
OFFICIALS HERE SAY THEY BELIEVE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF  
NIGERIA IS MORE STABLE BECAUSE IT IS MORE COMPETENT THAN ITS  
PREDECESSORS AND THEREFORE CAN BE EXPECTED TO LAST LONGER.  
GIVEN BOTSWANA'S BELIEF IN DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND  
NON-VIOLENCE, THERE ARE PRIVATE RESERVES ABOUT GON  
POLITICAL SYSTEM AND METHODS AND, ON BALANCE, A LACK OF  
ENTHUSIASM FOR THEM. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN  
INCREASING CONTACTS BETWEEN GOB AND GON WHICH HAVE  
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NOT BEEN ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY. TWO EXAMPLES MAY  
ILLUSTRATE: FIRST, SEVERAL MONTHS AGO NIGERIA  
REPORTEDLY AGREED TO ACCEPT SOME 100 SOWETO REFUGEE  
STUDENTS FROM BOTSWANA INTO NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.  
THE STUDENTS TRAVELLED TO LAGOS UNDER UNHCR FUNDS AND  
ESCORTED BY UNHCR REP (WHO IS OUR SOURCE). UPON  
ARRIVAL REFUGEE GROUP FOUND THAT GON MINISTRY OF

FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD AUTHORIZED THEIR ACCEPTANCE;  
HOWEVER, GON MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HAD NOT BEEN  
INFORMED AND WAS UNPREPARED TO ACCEPT THEM. GON  
REPORTEDLY THREATENED AT ONE POINT TO RETURN SOWETO STUDENTS  
TO BOTSWANA. ONLY AFTER LONG NEGOTIATION DID GON ACCEPT STUDENTS,  
AND THEN GRUDGINGLY; SECOND, IN THE PAST WEEK WE HAVE HEARD  
AUTHORITATIVELY (I.E., FROM GOB AND UNHCR) THAT PLANS HAVE BEEN  
CANCELLED FOR SENDING A SECOND GROUP OF 100 SOWETO  
REFUGEE STUDENTS TO NIGERIAN SCHOOLS. REFUSAL REPORTEDLY  
CAME AT THE LAST MINUTE AND AFTER WEEKS OF NEGOTIATIONS  
HAD AROUSED EXPECTATIONS AMONG STUDENTS. THESE AND  
SIMILAR ACTIONS ACCOUNT FOR A GENERAL REPUTATION FOR GON  
INEFFICIENCY AND, IN WORDS OF ONE RETURNED UNIVERSITY  
STUDENT, "INDIFFERENCE COMBINED WITH ARROGANCE" (AN  
ATTITUDE HELD BY INSIDERS, NOT GENERAL PUBLIC). AS  
FURTHER COMMENTARY ON LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARD GON, IT  
SHOULD BE ADDED THAT NIGERIAN HICOM HERE WAS NOT  
INVOLVED IN (OR INFORMED ABOUT) EITHER OF THE ABOVE  
EPISODES INVOLVING SOWETO REFUGEE STUDENTS GOING TO  
NIGERIA. THIS ENHANCES GENERAL REPUTATION FOR  
INEFFECTIVENESS, I.E., SHE IS A WONDERFULLY WARM AND  
DELIGHTFUL HOSTESS WHO IS EITHER UNINTERESTED IN DETAILS  
OF DIPLOMACY OR BESET BY PROBLEMS UNKNOWN TO HER  
COLLEAGUES.

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00  
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-05  
IO-13 /090 W

-----030193 091442Z /53

R 091012Z SEP 77  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0642  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GABORONE 2177

3. NIGERIA'S ROLE IN AFRICA. BOTSWANA'S PRECARIOUS  
GEOPOLITICAL LOCATION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA  
AND RHODESIA, COMBINED WITH ITS LIMITED RESOURCES,  
REQUIRES IT TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON PROBLEMS CLOSE TO HOME.  
WITH NIGERIA'S EMERGING ACTIVISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN

AFFAIRS, GOB INTEREST IN RELATIONS AND CONTACTS WITH NIGERIA HAS CORRESPONDINGLY INCREASED. ONE RANKING EXTAFF MINISTRY OFFICIAL SAID VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING MASIRE'S VISIT TO LAGOS EARLY AUGUST AND EXTAFF MIN MOGWE'S PRESENCE AT ANTI-APARTHEID CONFERENCE IN LAGOS WERE CALCULATED MOVES TO AFFIRM ENHANCED GOB INTEREST. MASIRE REPORTEDLY SOUTH NIGERIAN AID FOR FARAH COMMISSION OBJECTIVES. NOT SURPRISINGLY, NIGERIA'S REPUTATION AS THE RICHEST BLACK AFRICAN STATE, MAKES IT A TARGET FOR BOTSWANAN REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE. SUCH REQUESTS MAY NOT BE CONFINED TO ECONOMIC AID; WE NOTE GENERAL MERAFHE ACCOMPANIED MASIRE TO LAGOS, SPECULATION HAS IT THAT HIS PRESENCE WAS RELATED TO POSSIBLE GON ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING ITS FIVE-MONTH OLD DEFENSE FORCE. ACCORDING TO MEDIA REPORTS, NIGERIANS AGREED TO CONSIDER GOB REQUESTS BUT MADE NO COMMITMENTS. IN SUM, NIGERIA'S ROLE IN AFRICA IS STRENGTHENED IN GOB'S EYES  
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TO THE EXTENT THAT IT ACTIVELY PURSUES SOUTHERN AFRICA POLICIES THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THOSE OF GOB, I.E., EMPHASIZING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THE AREA'S PROBLEMS.

4. NIGERIA AS A SPOKESMAN FOR AFRICA. THE IDEA OF ONE AFRICAN STATE ASSUMING SPOKESMAN ROLE IS ALIEN TO GOB. ONE OFFICIAL SAID GOB DID NOT CONSIDER ANY COUNTRY AS HAVING THE RIGHT TO CLAIM IT IS SPOKESMAN FOR AFRICA. (AXTING ZAMBIAN HICOM, WHO HEARD THIS REMARK, NODDED AGREEMENT.) THIS FIRM ATTITUDE REFLECTS IN PART BOTSWANA'S UNIQUE POSITION VIS-A-VIS SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS NEED TO PROTECT ITSELF BY CAREFULLY MANAGING RELATIONS WITH SAG. GOB IS PLEASED TO MERGE WITH OTHERS IN CONDEMNING APARTHEID UNDER NIGERIAN LEADERSHIP BUT MUST DISSOCIATE ITSELF, FOR EXAMPLE, FROM CALS FOR ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA WHICH WOULD QUICKLY HURT BOTSWANA AT THE END OF ITS SUPPLY LINE WHICH ORIGINATES IN SOUTH AFRICA. IN BRIEF, BOTSWANA IS NOT WILLING TO RELINQUISH INDEPENDENCE BY ACCORDING A SPOKESMAN ROLE TO ANY AFRICAN COUNTRY.  
NORLAND

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Type:** TE  
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